(d) The information of the ratio of the loaders to face the area which is made available for production is not available since it does not form part of management information system of BCCL.

(e) and (f) No, Sir. According to information furnished by BCCL, the productivity of miners/loaders, overall productivity for open cast mines and also underground mines in Bharat Coking Coal Limited for the last 3 years has been on the increase as would be evident from the data given below :—

Productivity of

(in tonnes per manshift)

Year	Miners/ Loaders	Overall underground mines	Overall opencast mines
1991-92	1.91	0.44	2.10
1992-93	1.97	0.45	2.16
1993-94 (Provisional)	2.14	0.48	2.22

Open cast mining in upper Assam Coalfields

3621. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that inspite of vehement protests by the public and other popular organisations open cast mining is rampant in upper Assam coal fields;

(b) Whether Government is also aware that due to the open cast mining the nearby paddy fields are badly damaged and polluted beyond recovary ;

(c) whether Government will take immediate steps to stop the open cast mining ;

(d) whether the coal mafia is still powerful in Upper Assam which defies any Government's order and operates at its will ; and

(e) if so, what steps are taken by Government to contain this mafia group ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) (a) to (c) The issue of environmental degradation caused by opencast mining had been earlier brought to the notice of Central Government by various distinguished persons, organisations and Government of Assam. The Ministry of Environment & Forests had constituted an Expert Committee in 1988 to look into the environmental problems arising out of coal mining operations by Coal India Ltd. On the basis of the recommendations of the Expert Committee the Government decided to stop opencast mining at Tikak.

Presently in Assam only in one opencast mine viz., Tirap, coal mining operations are being carried out. In Tikak CC, enviromental restoration work was undertaken and subsequently the site was visited by State Pollution Control Board who appreciated the measures taken by North Eastern Coalfields. While mining causes degradation of land etc. restoration and environmental protection measures are also adopted by North Eastern Coalfields.

(d) and (e) According to information supplied by CIL they are not aware of any coal mafia in North Eastern Coalfields.